

amount is a small price to pay to protect the public and our national treasures in a manner that does not hold this local community hostage.

I urge my colleagues to examine these proposals and the funding of this plan. I am not suggesting that it necessarily needs to be the final answer, but it is an important first step to keep our Nation's capital and its citizens safe, healthy and economically secure while we assure that Timothy McVeigh and Osama bin Laden are not the dominant forces in American landscape architecture, public space and transportation for the next 50 years.

STRENGTHENING IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, President Bush signed into law the antiterrorism bill. This new law contains many provisions that will increase the ability of law enforcement, intelligence and other government agencies to combat terrorism. While this legislation is an important critical piece, although some may say controversial, in eradicating terrorism and ensuring the safety and prosperity of the American way of life to continue, the war, my colleagues, cannot be won without the key component of securing our borders from those who wish to cause us harm.

The values and ideals of this Nation are built on the contribution and sacrifices of immigrants who journeyed across the oceans for a better way of life that could only be found in this land. As such, America has and always will serve as a beacon of hope for those in oppressed other lands. It is, after all, the diverse nature of our people that has made America such a great country.

However, those who violate our Nation's immigration laws do more harm than good in furthering our country's values. And it is those people we must ensure that do not enter our country. Take, for example, what happened nearly 2 years ago when a lone U.S. Customs agent working at a remote border post in Northwest Washington foiled a terrorist attack on the Los Angeles Airport. An alert Customs Service inspector stopped and arrested Ahmed Ressam, a bin-Laden associate, in December of 1999 with a car load of bomb-making material before he was allowed to enter into Washington State from Canada. Unfortunately, our luck ran out with the tragic events of September 11.

It now appears that some of the terrorists involved in September 11 may have entered the U.S. from Canada, much as Ahmed Ressam attempted when he was arrested.

According to the INS records, 13 of the 19 hijackers entered the U.S. with valid visas. Three of the 13 remained in

the country after their visas had expired. Two were expected to have entered on foreign student visas and the INS has no information on the six remaining hijackers. As such, we can keep enacting legislation and, of course, spend more money; but efforts to counter terrorism will be futile unless we establish effective controls to secure our boarders and points of entry.

Each year there are more than 300 million border crossings in the United States. These are just the legal crossings that are recorded. While there are 9,000 border control agents working to keep America secure on the U.S.-Mexican border, there are less than 500 agents tasked with securing our 4,000-mile border with Canada.

To make matters even worse, out of the 128 ports on the northern border, only 24 of them are open around the clock. The remaining are not even manned, thereby allowing anyone with good or evil intentions to enter into the United States without even so much as an inspection, not to mention even a question or a record of their entry.

A recent report by the nonprofit organization, the Center on Immigration Studies, indicates that there are more than 8 million people now living in the U.S. illegally. About 40 to 50 percent of these violators are people who entered the United States legally, but did not leave with the expiration of their visas.

As it now stands, our immigration system needs increased and tighter controls. Currently our Nation has an unmonitored, nonimmigrant visa system in which 7.1 million tourists, business visitors, foreign students, and temporary workers arrive. To date, the INS does not have a reliable tracking system to determine how many of these visitors left the country when their visas expired.

Furthermore, among the 7.1 million nonimmigrants, 500,000 foreign nationals enter the United States on foreign student visas. Hani Hanjour, the person who was believed to have piloted the American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon is believed to have entered the country with a foreign student visa but never actually attended classes.

Mr. Speaker, our unsecure borders, along with inadequate record-keeping, have contributed to our inability to track terrorism in our country, or to prevent them from entering in the first place. I am encouraged by legislation being drafted in the Senate which aims to strengthen our border security in the fight to counter terrorism. Additionally, I am pleased that President Bush announced that the White House wants to tighten immigration laws and requirements for student visas to deter would-be terrorists from entering this country.

I urge my colleagues to make tightening our immigration laws and securing our borders a top priority in the war against terrorism.

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, in response to the emergent threats of bioterrorism, Congress will take concrete steps in the coming weeks to strengthen our Nation's public health infrastructure. To fully prepare for the potential bioterrorist attacks, we will have to deal with a wide variety of public health issues including vaccinations and food safety and government stockpiling of antibiotics. In doing so, we must not forget to address the issue of antibiotic resistance.

The links between antibiotic resistance and bioterrorism are clear. Antibiotic resistant strains of anthrax or other bacterial agents would be extremely lethal biological weapons, and they are already a reality.

According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, during the Cold War, Russian scientists engineered an anthrax strain that was resistant to the tetracycline and penicillin classes of antibiotics. We can only assume that anthrax and other bacterial agents could also be engineered to resist antibiotics, including new valuable antibiotic therapies like Cipro.

Antibiotic resistance is also relevant to the threat of bioterrorism in other significant ways. The overuse and the misuse of antibiotics by physicians, patients, and hospitals renders bacterial agents more resistant to the antibiotic drugs that they are exposed to and could leave the Nation poorly prepared for a biological attack.

It is a vicious cycle because the threat of bioterrorism can lead to the overuse and the abuse of antibiotics, people taking Cipro when they do not need it, for example, which in turn could make these antibiotics less effective against the agents of bioterrorism.

During the last couple of months, thousands of Americans have been prescribed the antibiotic Cipro because of a legitimate risk of exposure to anthrax. That use of antibiotics is appropriate. But the thousands more who have sought antibiotic prescriptions for Cipro without any indication of need or even a risk of infection can be a problem.

The widespread use of Cipro will kill bacteria that are susceptible to the drug, but will leave behind bacteria that are not. Those bacteria that are not killed will then have the opportunity to thrive and develop an even greater resistance to Cipro, requiring an alternative antibiotic to kill them and diminishing the overall effectiveness of Cipro.

Many pathogenic bacteria that cause severe human illnesses are already resistant to older antibiotics like penicillin, as we all know. That is one reason newer antibiotics like Cipro are used to treat dangerous infections.